
IMMANUELITE

February 2016

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From the Pastor What benefits does baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

Up until this newsletter article I have always begun my essays with a quotation of Scripture. I thought this month to begin with a comprehensive statement from Luther's Small Catechism about the benefits of baptism. When you think about it this is a bold statement. After all baptism is nothing other than a washing with ordinary water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, yet Luther asserts that such washing works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe this. Upon what basis can Luther make such a bold assertion?

He makes that assertion on the basis of the Word of God itself. Let us begin with the forgiveness of sins. In Acts chapter 2 the Holy Spirit comes down on the disciples. The Holy Spirit enables them to speak in other languages. When the disciples begin to speak the Word of God in other languages it amazes the non disciples who

inquire as to how this could be. In explanation Peter preaches his first sermon. At the end of the sermon his hearers are pricked to the heart because of their sins. Concerned that they might be damned for their sins they ask (in verse 37), "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter answered (verses 38-39), "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."

Thus Peter who was filled with the Holy Spirit and thus spoke with God's own authority tells the assembly at his first sermon and also us through the Holy Scriptures the purpose of Baptism. It is for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore baptism bestows God's grace. Furthermore Peter asserts in the power of the Holy Spirit that Baptism bestows the Holy Spirit. Therefore anyone who is baptized receives the same Holy Spirit that the disciples received on the Day of Pentecost. This is how our bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 6:19). It is also how we drank of the one Holy Spirit and thus were baptized into one body, the body of Christ (1Corinthians 12:13).

In Acts chapter 22 Paul recounts his own conversion. He talks about how the Lord Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He explains what the Lord said and how the Lord struck him blind. He explains how the Lord sent Ananias to him to restore his sight. Since the Lord sent Ananias to Paul, Ananias spoke to Paul with the Lord's authority. In verses 13-17 with that authority Ananias told Paul, "The God of our fathers appointed you to know His will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth; for you will be a witness for Him to everyone of what you

have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Once again baptism bestows forgiveness here described as the washing away of sins.

The next thing that Luther asserts is that baptism rescues us from death. From where can he make this bold assertion? He makes this assertion on the basis of the Holy Scriptures. Romans 6:3-5 states, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." First, by joining us to Christ's death and resurrection baptism grants us a new life free from sin, but also by joining us to Christ's death it joins us to His resurrection. The specific words are "if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." While the main thrust of Romans 6 is our spiritual death to sin and our spiritual resurrection to life with God, if we have been united to Christ Jesus in a death and resurrection like His then we have been united to His physical death and resurrection. His death and resurrection were physical. If we have been united in a death and resurrection like His, then we have been united to a physical death and resurrection. Therefore our physical death after which we are buried is the fulfillment of our baptism in joyful expectation of the resurrection of our bodies on the last day when Christ returns (1Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:20-21; 1John 3:2) When Christ Jesus raises our bodies from death, He will have saved us from death. Baptism is His way therefore of making this promise. Since God is making the promise it is assured and has as good as already taken place even though it has not. Therefore Luther writes that baptism rescues from death.

I want to deal with the devil last and so I will consider next Luther's statement that Baptism bestows everlasting salvation. 1Peter 3:18-22 states, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the

unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him." The verse that I would call your attention to is verse 21 which states that Baptism now saves you. It does so by the power of our Lord's resurrection. If our Lord had not risen from the dead, then baptism would be an empty ceremony commanded by some nice man a long time ago. But as it is baptism is commanded by the one who rose from the dead and as such holds the power of life and death and if He asserts that it saves you, then it saves you, because He has the authority to place His promises wherever He wants to place them. On this same subject consider Titus 3:5, "He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

Now I do not know of a Bible passage that specifically connects Baptism to rescue from the devil. If you know of one, please bring it to my attention. But I put it to you that if baptism forgives you of your sins, grants you resurrection from the dead, and saves you, then it rescues you from the devil by definition. After all what does the devil want except your death (John 8:44)?

Now, what do such passages say about the nature of Baptism? Everlasting salvation is a gift. Consider Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." If eternal life is a free gift and eternal life is liberation from sin and death, then Baptism is a free gift also because Baptism bestows everlasting salvation. Therefore Baptism is a gift.

If Baptism is a gift, it is not a rule to be kept. If Baptism is a gift, then we should

think of it as we think of the gifts that our parents gave us on Christmas morning. We did not earn them or provide them. Our parents did not have to make us open them. We opened them for the joy of what they were and the love of our parents. One gets baptized in order to receive the gifts that God bestows in and through baptism. One does not get baptized in order to confess one's faith (which a statement to that effect is nowhere in the Bible) nor do we do it to please our parents or grandparents.

Furthermore Baptism is not the only gift that God gives. Most parents give more than one gift on Christmas morning. God your Father has more gifts than Baptism. In other words Baptism is not the only means by which God forgives you and saves you. Consider for example Luke 24:45-47, "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'" According to this passage preaching bestows repentance and forgiveness just as Baptism does. Thus preaching also bestows everlasting salvation. If a person is not baptized that does not necessarily damn them to hell. They may have been saved by the Word of God in preaching (Luke 23:39-43 where the Lord preaches to the criminal on the cross. The "sermon" may be short, but it is the Word of the Lord nonetheless and in the case of this criminal it is straight from the Lord Himself.). That is why only despising baptism is a rejection of God's plan for your life (Luke 7:29-30).

Therefore Baptism is not to be kept as a rule. While it is factor in determining salvation, it is not the only factor and therefore cannot be used as the only means by which salvation is determined for anyone. Baptism is a gift that God gave to you. The point is to rejoice that you have it and to seek to give it to others remembering that it is to be bestowed upon them as a gift and not imposed on them as a rule.

Because of Jesus,
Pastor



We have a collection box to help the schools by collecting Betty Crocker Boxtops and Campbell Soup labels. We will take our collection at the end of the school year and divide them among the schools that our students attend. This helps the schools purchase items that help the students. The collection box is on the red board in the hallway.



G.R.O.W., a Christian ecumenical men's group in the Newman/Broadlands area, will meet Sunday, February 7th at Broadlands Community Church. All interested Christian men in the area are invited to attend the meeting, which begins with breakfast at 7:00am and includes a devotion and a spiritually uplifting topic or speaker each month. There is no charge for the meeting, although opportunity is given for a free-will offering, which is used in various ways to serve others in the community and beyond.



The office will be closed February 15-19. Loretta will be on vacation. If you need assistance call Pastor Sharp. Bulletins will be done ahead if you need something in please get it in before February 10th.



Those celebrating the anniversary of their Baptism into God's Holy Family during the month of February include:

- 4- Fred Keehner
Jennifer Keehner
Paula Keehner
- 6- Laura Benschneider
Stacy Woodworth
- 7- Wesley Luth
Rosie Orwick
- 10-Ginna Stierwalt
- 11- Caroline Dohme
Dylan Dohme
Jacob Dohme
- 14- Elyse Wolf
Kyle Beck
- 17-Gwen Garwood
- 19- Jordan Rahe
- 21-Morgan Freeman
Anthony Roberts
- 22-Rita Hendershot
Tammy Grafton
Mary Ann Rohl
Abigail Teague
- 23- Irma Clem
Robert Rothermel
- 24-Nancy Aden
Danielle Ireland
Paula Mohr
- 25-P. Jean Bergmeier
- 27-Sarah Goetting



CHURCH
D I R E C T O R Y

Here are the directory changes to date.

Creighton Pierce
7130 Austrian Pine Way Apt 21C
Portage, MI 49024-3946

We need the address for the following. If you know how to reach them, please let the office know.

- Todd & Jennifer Buchanon
- Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Budde
- Tammy Grafton
- Mr. & Mrs. Dave Kelly
- Alicia Laws
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Laws
- Shirley Luth- phone number

Steve Messman- phone number
Mr. & Mrs. Brian O'Donnell
Rebecca Rahe
Ryan Rahe
Kathy Richter
Rebecca Taylor



FIRST MONDAY SEWING

The Pathfinders Sewing Group will meet the 1st Monday of each month at 9:00am and sew till about 3:00 pm with lunch at noon. Anyone interested in sewing, please join us the 1st of February at 9:00am.



Immanuelite articles will be due in the office on, Monday, February 22nd. If you would like something in the newsletter, drop off or email your articles. It would be much appreciated if the boards would update the office on calendar events and meeting dates for each month. Thanks!!



Remember to save those printer cartridges. Turn them in at the office. We will recycle them and use the money to offset office expenses. The recycle company is now accepting old cell phones also. If you want to discard them, you may drop them at the office also. Thanks and happy recycling. Go Green!



Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

LUKE 2:52, NIV



The Knitting Group will meet on February 15th at 1:30 pm. Hope to see a lot of new faces this year.

SPECIAL DATES

- * Groundhog Day, February 2, 2016
- * Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 7, 2016
- * Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016
- * Valentine's Day, February 14, 2016
- * First Sunday in Lent, February 14, 2016
- * President's Day, February 15, 2016
- * Second Sunday in Lent, February 21, 2016
- * Third Sunday in Lent, February 28, 2016



Humor For Your Health!

Proverbs 17:22 A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.

Psalm 144:5 Happy are the people whose God is Lord.

Dear friends and family,

Being seriously ill is no laughing matter. But for many years medical professionals have recognized that those patients who maintain a positive mental attitude and shared laughter responded better to treatment. Body responses to laughter include increase respiration, increased circulation, hormonal and digestive enzyme secretion and a leveling of blood pressure. All good things for your health!

Today interest in humor's effects has grown so much that the field has a

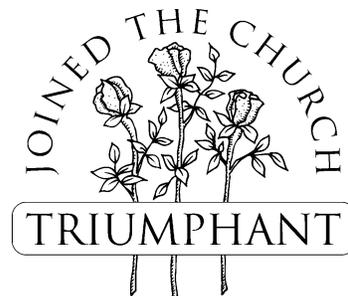
name: psychoneuroimmunology, the study of how psychological factors, the brain and the immune system interact to influence health. Norman Cousins documented the first case of how humor can positively affect a disease. He was stricken with a very painful disease. During his illness he discovered that 15 minutes of hardy laughter could produce 2 hours of pain free sleep. So, while being ill is no laughing matter, finding humor and something to laugh about daily can be good for your health.

Tip of the month/Action Steps:

- *Rent your favorite, funniest video and share a laugh with a friend.
- *Have a good belly laugh today.
- *Take 15 minutes to yourself today.
- *Find humor in something ordinary today.
- *Smile at 5 people you see today and see how many people smile back.

Your Immanuel Parish Nurses, Jody Farmer and Tiffany Paul

Blood pressure screening will be February 7th and 21st at 8:30 and 10:15am.



Juanita Luth Schweineke went to be with the Lord on December 29, 2015. She was born March 17, 1921. She was married to Ralph Schweineke. She is survived by three daughters, Roxie Sage, Nancy Aden and JoEllen Farmer and their families. Our thoughts are with the families.





**Baby Bottle Fundraiser for
Pregnancy Resource Center**

Since the Roe v. Wade decision in 1972, there have been more than 58 million babies aborted. January and February are the months that we collect your spare change for **Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center**. **Living Alternatives** is committed to saving the lives of unborn children by promoting life-affirming options and providing practical assistance, while sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and to minister restoration to those who have been wounded by the trauma of abortion. PRC's #1 goal as a ministry is to reach pregnant women who are considering abortion, present them with accurate information about their options, and make the life-affirming options of parenting and adoption as hopeful as possible. PRC's #2 goal is to provide every client the choice to hear how they can receive eternal life through Jesus Christ, and to connect them with a local church or Bible study. Please consider supporting this ministry with prayer and monetary donations. **Baby bottles** are located at the back of the church. Sunday, February 28 will be the last day to return the bottles. **If you have any questions, please see Bob or Sally Goetting.**

Hello fellow churches,



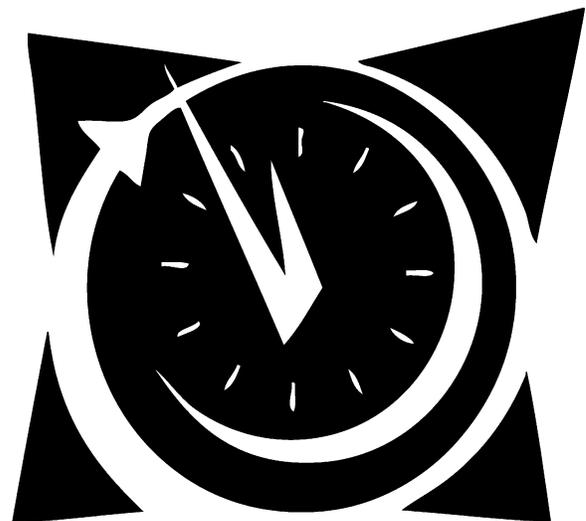
Friendship Lutheran Church of Joy (Champaign, IL) will be hosting a Valentine's Day dinner on February 13th beginning at 5pm. This is a fundraiser for

our youth to attend the National Youth Gathering July of 2016. We are inviting you! Please bring your significant other and/or friends! We will have card tables set up with four people per table. It will be free will donation (a recommended donation of \$20-\$30 per person). We will have a 3-course meal followed by games and other entertainment.

Please call Friendships office @ 217-355-0454 and ask for Katrina to sign up. When you call to make a reservation, let us know whether you will want lasagna or vegetable lasagna with white sauce. Again, there will be tables of four. If you have four people you would like to sit with, please let us know.

We want this to be an enjoyable evening for you this Valentine's day. We look forward to seeing and getting to know you.

In Christ, Friendship Lutheran Church of Joy



**NEVER STOP
PRAYING.**

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

Shoebboxes for kids



Operation
Christmas Child: Pack a
shoebbox...protect a girl!!!

The following article mentions the importance of including dresses in shoebboxes for girls, and may be found at: <http://www.simplyshoebboxes.com/2014/09/packing-boxes-for-girls-verses-boys-why.html>

Packing Boxes for Girls Verses Boys: Why I Sew Dozens of Dresses

Most of us know that Operation Christmas Child reports most boxes are packed for 5 to 9 year old girls and boys and that 10 to 14 and 2 to 4 year old boys receive the least. This has caused many of us, including my family, to focus the bulk of our packing for boys. I'm taking some time to rethink my packing in light of what I have learned about many cultures around the world from being involved with the representatives of Dress A Girl Around the World.

Dress A Girl Around The World's [DAG] goal is to provide dignity and protection to young girls in crisis situations while letting them know they are loved. Their website says there are many "girls who live in a society where they have no value—where they are used as slaves—where they are abused and preyed upon and no one considers this to be unspeakable injustice. By providing a new dress you may well be changing a young girl's destiny. Village pastors tell us that a girl wearing a new dress presents an appearance that she is well cared for and may discourage would-be predators."

I have personally spoken to some of the women who have taken dresses to little girls around the world and heard their stories. In many of these cultures the hierarchy is Men, Boys, Women and then girls. If money or supplies are short

the girls are left without. Many of the little girls they gave dresses to had no clothing at all. Many of the schools they visited had uniforms that the girls put on when arriving at school, when they left many wore nothing.

These sweet girls often have the responsibility of fetching the water for the family. They go to the public water source and are often abused or even forced into human trafficking. And as stated above, often a new dress is enough protection to stop a predator.

So for the time being, as long as I have fabric to make dresses, I will keep sewing and send love and dignity to little girls thru shoe box gifts that include dresses. And hopefully, some will find their way in Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes to little girls who need the protection.

****If you are interested in making simple dresses for the shoebboxes this year, please see Annette Gerdes or Sally Goetting. If you would like to view a dress pattern, please see: <http://www.simplyshoebboxes.com/2013/10/simple-pillow-case-style-dress.html>**





Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I recently received the proceeds from the Bear Hunt raffle for Dean. Once again I am humbled by the generosity and support of the congregation and feel very blessed. I would like to thank everyone involved. God bless you all.

Sharon Rothermel

Catechetical Corner

What is the First Article of the Apostles' Creed?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine, goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

What is the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed?

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

What is the Introduction to the Lord's Prayer?

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father.

